

Machiavelli's Narrowness.

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that of State necessity. Force and craft are the indispensable qualifications of this ruler. The art of government must in the nature of things be an essentially immoral art. It might be from the standpoint of his time, which counted a Louis XL, a Ferdinand of Spain, a Caesar Borgia among its successful rulers. But, in narrowing politics to the measure of the successful politicians of his own time, or of ancient times, he was neither scientific nor just to human nature. It did not occur to him to ask whether, even from the historic standpoint, he was right in assuming that the arts of a Louis XI. constitute the Alpha and Omega of politics, or that human nature is at all times radically bad. If we were to narrow history and human nature to his horizon, we should rob the world of much that has been the mainspring of political life in its nobler forms. Thank God, the Italy or the Europe of Machiavelli is not the measure of humanity, even in politics. It is sufficient for him that he cannot regenerate Italy or rule mankind in the sixteenth century without the aid of all the arts of the cheat and the villain, to deduce from history the science of this villainy as the science of politics. For our part, we would rather not have a State which depends for its initiation and preservation on the commission of every crime that history records, even if it succeeds in unifying Italy. The fact is, that such a State is an impossibility. Even politics must have some place for God and conscience, apart from the grossly utilitarian standpoint. You cannot rule man on the mere assumption that religion is at best but a political force, and conscience but a trump card in the game of the political gambler. Morality has its place, and sometimes asserts its place, in startling fashion, in all the relations of human life, politics included. The history of Germany, the Netherlands, France, Scotland, England, was to show in the very century in which Machiavelli wrote, greatly to the surprise and sometimes to the discomfiture of princes of the Machiavellian type, that religious and moral conviction is a tremendous force in the making and unmaking of States.

For us, however, the important question, next to his method, is not the use he makes of it to deduce an unconscionable despotism for a practical political object. More pat to our purpose is the question whether he contributes anything